
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1737

Brief Description: Concerning supervision of physician assistants.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Manweller, Clibborn and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires osteopathic physician assistants to receive approval from the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery and physician assistants to receive approval from the Medical Quality Assurance Commission before being utilized in a remote site.
- Allows osteopathic physicians and physicians to enter into delegation agreements with five physician assistants, with the ability to petition for a waiver of the limit.
- Changes references to the "practice arrangement plan" to "delegation agreement."

Hearing Date: 2/21/13

Staff: Cherlyn Walden (786-7296).

Background:

The Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (Board) regulates the practice of osteopathic medicine by osteopathic physicians and physician assistants. An osteopathic physician assistant (OPA) is a person who has satisfactorily completed a Board-approved training program designed to prepare him or her to practice osteopathic medicine to a limited extent. An OPA may not practice osteopathic medicine until a practice arrangement plan is approved. A practice arrangement plan delineates the manner and extent to which the OPA will practice and be supervised, and must jointly be submitted by the osteopathic physician or physician group and the OPA. An OPA also may not be employed or supervised by an osteopathic physician without approval of the Board. An OPA is permitted to practice medicine only to the extent permitted by the Board in a manner consistent with the approved practice arrangement plan.

The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) regulates the quality of healthcare provided by physicians and physician assistants. A physician assistant (PA) is a person who is

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licensed by the Commission to practice medicine to a limited extent and who is academically and clinically prepared to provide health care services and perform diagnostic, therapeutic, preventative, and health maintenance services. A PA practices medicine under the supervision of a physician, but a PA cannot be employed or supervised by a physician or physician group without the approval of the Commission. Prior to practicing, a PA has to apply to the Commission for permission to be employed or supervised by a physician or physician group. A practice arrangement plan must be jointly submitted by the physician or physician group and the PA. A PA is permitted to practice medicine only to the extent permitted by the Commission in a manner consistent with the approved practice arrangement plan.

The administrative rules provide that an osteopathic physician may supervise three OPAs, and the Board may consider requests to supervise more than three OPAs, based on the individual's qualification and experience among other factors. Similarly, a physician may not serve as primary supervisor or sponsor for more than three PAs without authorization by the Commission. The administrative rules also provide that OPAs and PAs may be used at remote practice sites if approved by the relevant governing authority based upon need; adequate means for immediate communication between the osteopathic physician or physician and the OPA or PA; supervision; and the names of the supervising osteopathic physician or physician and OPA or PA being prominently displayed at the entrance of the site or reception area.

Summary of Bill:

Osteopathic physician assistants (OPA) and physician assistants (PA) cannot be used at a remote site without the approval of their respective regulating bodies. A "remote site" is defined as a setting physically separate from the sponsoring or supervising physician's primary place for meeting patients or a setting where the physician is present less than 25 percent of the practice time of the OPA or PA. Approval may be granted for the use of an OPA or PA at a remote site if there is a demonstrated need; adequate ability to timely communicate between the physician and the OPA or PA; the responsible sponsoring or supervising physician spends at least 10 percent of the practice time of the OPA or PA in the remote site, unless the sponsoring physician can demonstrate that adequate supervision is being maintained by an alternate method; and the names of the sponsoring or supervising physician and the OPA or PA is prominently displayed at the entrance to the remote site. No OPA or PA with an interim permit may be utilized at a remote site.

An osteopathic physician or a physician may enter into a practice arrangement plan (delegation agreement) with five physician assistants, but may petition their respective regulating bodies for a waiver of the limit. An osteopathic physician or physician may not supervise more physician assistants than he or she can adequately supervise.

The practice arrangement plan required for approval before a physician assistant can practice is changed to be referred to as a delegation agreement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.